

SMILE ZOLA, NOVELIST AND EFOEMER 329

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vitation on Zola's behalf, and also quite willing to attend the dinner, felt that he must not attempt to take any prominent part in the proceedings. If he had foreseen that his father, who was still living in retirement near Tilford, would be dead some three months later, he might have adopted quite another course, in order to procure some personal satisfaction for the poor old man who had been pelted with mud, ruined, and sent to prison. But he thought it premature to bring his father forward at that juncture, and therefore he said nothing to him or to anybody else on the subject. Thus it came to pass that after Zola's visit, the inquiry, "Where was Vizetelly?" — started, the writer believes, by Mr. Joseph Hatton — went the round of the newspapers; but while some raised it with the best of intentions, others repeated it with a malicious sneer, a circumstance which seemed to indicate that Vizetelly's son had really taken the wisest course. When the Journalists' arrangements had been ascertained, the Authors' Club dinner was fixed for September 28; and Zola, writing to Ernest Vizetelly on the twelfth, to express his approval, said: "Let me add, that I leave you full liberty. Whether those gentlemen invite me as a novelist or as President of the Societe des Gens de Lettres, I shall in either case feel deeply touched and flattered. I am not a formalist; all genuine sympathy, in whatever respect, will go to my heart."

" It was on September 20 that the novelist arrived in

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London¹ in the company of a dozen French journalists, —

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MM. Magnard, Scholl, Eobbe, Xau, Mille, and

others. Ma-

dame Zola and a few other ladies were likewise
of the party.

¹ Vizetelly met him at Calais.

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